1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all
754 Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest
[187] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wadde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[2] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[3] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen
754 murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the
683 alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 52-4.

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to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only somewhat less cruel than those of Glasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*. In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangan*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuda marna*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word '*magician*' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

White Magic

The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leshis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

Q A See ch. 116, pp. 423-424. — Author

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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TABLE FOUR

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Sex-ratio in 100 cases, involving 117 convictions	
Male	112
Female	5

674 648 The Bison-horn Maria do not live in complete isolation. They are in contact with other people, what are often called civilized people. But this contact is mainly a business and commercial contact; it is not an emotional one. Normally there are few chances in any relationship between a Maria and a Hindu or Mussalman for the development of those intense and passionate feelings that may lead to murder. This will probably account for the very small number of people murdered who belonged to other communities.

674 TABLE FIVE

Illustrating caste of victims in 107 cases	
Fellow-Maria	99
Other castes	8

Two of these were killed for their possessions in straightforward robbery—very unusual incidents. One of the victims was a Kalar who was going to report a cattle-theft. One was a boy caught in a madman's fury. But it might have been anyone. [683] Another was a Rawat. But the Rawat, who are the herdsmen of the Maria, live so closely with them as to count almost as members of the tribe. Once during a gambling quarrel a Mahara beat a Maria, a serious matter involving the Maria's excommunication. In one case a Mahara woman was chosen as a human sacrifice. In only one case was a member of another caste involved with a Maria woman. A Dhobi tried to seduce a Maria girl, but it was the girl who was murdered.

674 684

I have heard, however, of another case (not among the 100) where the wife of a Maria, one Poyami Masa, at Kodenar had an intrigue with a Kalar liquor-vendor. One night very late the woman—according to previous arrangement—got up and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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I. Murder for gain. 677[x]
II. Murder from revenge.
III. Murder for elimination.
IV. Murder from jealousy.
V. Murder from lust of killing.
VI. Murder from conviction.

Among the Maria there are very few murders for gain, 674[x] for where is the property to be acquired? It would be 152 laughable to imagine in a Maria village the situation so dear to the writer of detective stories, the murder of an elderly person by his heirs for the sake of his money. Murder from revenge occurs, but in not more than half a dozen cases. I describe later a remarkable case of murder for elimination. Murder from jealousy covers a number of the tragedies which involve relations between husband and wife. I am doubtful whether any of the Maria murders could be included under the heading 'Murder from lust of killing'.

Tennyson Jesse's sixth class 'Murder from conviction' is, I believe, much more common among the aboriginals and leads us to the vexed and difficult problem of how to deal with persons whose ideas of right and wrong vary in certain remarkable respects from those of the modern world. Without exception, every Maria believes that it is the right and [683] proper thing to kill a witch or sorcerer. In this the Maria is not criminal; he is merely out-of-date. Two hundred years ago the best brains in Europe believed the same. Almost all Maria consider that a wife caught in the act of adultery with [684] her lover deserves immediate execution, and here again the Maria are simply out-of-date, though in this case they are rather more behind the times than they are about witchcraft. Kinberg has an interesting passage on this subject. 690

> A comparison between the judgements passed on one type of action by different peoples, or by one people at different periods of its history, brings out how purely relative moral evaluations are. If a man catches his wife *in flagranti* with her lover and kills them both, he will in Sweden be condemned to a long term of penal servitude for manslaughter and his action will be strongly disapproved. In Latin countries, on the other hand, the same action would in the majority of cases be declared by the jury not to be culpable, and would cause no general moral indignation. Such is the difference in the moral evalua-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual 755 periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices 841 to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from menorrhagia was cured by this means. [762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

[751]

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683

Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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754 183 of fear. Sori Bhima killed a neighbour Kosa, who suffered from yaws, believing him to be a wizard and responsible for the death of his children.

Vedta Sukra murdered his uncle Kola, the headman of Surguda, for being a wizard. Three years before, Sukra's three-year old daughter had died, and the cause had been diagnosed as Kola's magic. Immediately before the tragedy, Sukra's little son died after a month's illness, and members of the family went to a Siraha at Sarjiguda to find out why. The Siraha invoked the deity Madin Deo onto his person, and the deity declared through him that the death was the result of Kola's magic. The next day Sukra went with a number of villagers to the place where his child had been cremated. Heaps of rice were placed in front of the ashes, in the names of Mirchuk (which kills children), the Village Mother, the Departed, Bhagavan and the suspect Kola. A chicken was allowed to make its choice among the heaps, and it pecked up rice from those of Mirchuk and Kola. From this the people deduced that Kola had killed the child with the help of Mirchuk Deo.

The following day Kola was found lying dead in a pool of blood on his own thrashing-floor. Sukra admitted his crime and no doubt considered that his action was justified and indeed laudable.

754 578 One day the sago palm belonging to Hunga of Gudse village ceased to give the usual juice. Hunga went to the village Siraha, a young man called Kosa, to find out what was the matter, and received the reply that it was due to the magic of Pandru, one of the neighbours. Sometime later, Pandru and Kosa met in the local liquor shop and had a drink together, and presently Kosa accused Pandru to his face of doing magic against Hunga's tree. Pandru became very angry at this, and abused Kosa and his gods. Expressing himself in typical Maria fashion, he pulled out a few of his pubic hairs and threw them on Kosa's head. Kosa slapped Pandru's face twice and went away.

Nothing happened for five months. But then on the evening of 14 April 1922, Kosa went out to look for a straying cow. His way took him near Pandru's house who, when he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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the Tangkhul by fine, amounting to six cows. At Jessami in the Mao group the offender has to make a short sojourn away from his house, but not necessarily outside the village; while at Liyai he is banished from the village. At Mao his punishment is seven years' banishment from the village and a fine of five cows. At Maikel banishment for one year and a fine of five cows, while murder ensuing in the heat of passion in a quarrel is punished with seven years' banishment and a fine of ten cows. The Mayang Khong people exact only a fine of one cow in cases of accidental homicide. Both the Chiru and the Marring impose a heavy fine in such cases, part of the fine being compensation to the relatives of the dead man and the rest being consumed by the village in the course of the settlement of the matter.

In some cases the weapon or other lethal instrument is forfeited to the relatives—a proceeding reminiscent of the law of Deodand.[1]

In former years adultery was commonly punished, so far as the male offender was concerned, with death and this proceeding gave no occasion for a feud. Among the Tangkhul theft was at one time punished with death, if the offender was caught in the act. Nowadays a fine is held sufficient. Arson is penalized and is considered so serious that even when it is accidental, a heavy fine is demanded.

In Bastar also it was formerly the custom for the people to take the law into their own hands and where necessary to pay compensation for doing so to the local authorities. In fact, the older Maria still remember how in the days of their grandparents compensation for murder was paid to the Jia (the high priest) of Dantewara or to the Nengi and Hikmi (State representatives) at Mailawada. A very old man at Harmamunda described how, 'In the old days when a witch was caught, her hands were cut off; and she was taken to the Nengi and Hikmi who were paid eight female calves. If a man was found practising black magic, his teeth were first knocked out with a large bone, and then the bone itself was pushed into his mouth until he died'. The idea was that he had done his evil with the purpose of 'eating' or gain and so he was given a bone to eat. When this happened, the

[1] T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), pp. 106 f. For an account of the attitude of society and 'judicial murder' in Papua, see F. E. Williams, 'Group Sentiment and Primitive Justice', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII (New Series), pp. 523 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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627 683 Nengi and Hikmi received eight male calves. 'Sometimes the witch or sorcerer had all their teeth knocked out, their mouths were burnt with hot oil, and they were banished from their village. With this mark upon them no one would shelter them. Yet another method of dealing with a witch was to tie her up in a sack and throw her into the river'. In another village I was told how a witch was wrapped up in straw and burnt alive.

An old man at Dhurli described how his brother had been killed by a witch's magic. When the Waddai confirmed this, his father killed the witch and paid compensation of four female calves to the Jia.

At Phulpar the headman said that in the old days they used to break the teeth of a witch, shave her head, cut her forehead with a broken bangle and so drive her from the village. Similarly I was told in several places in Konta Tahsil that the people used to cut a witch's nails, shave her head and drive her away. They would confiscate her property and often kill her. There has never been any doubt whatever in the minds of Maria with whom I have discussed this matter that a witch or a sorcerer ought to be punished with death, and that the public were perfectly justified in taking the law into their own hands in a proved case of witchcraft.[1]

627 682 There are probably many cases never discovered by the police that are settled by the Maria panchayat. In others, after everything has been settled by the panchayat, the police have discovered that a crime has been committed. There were as many as 12 such cases out of our 100. And they are instructive. For example, when Mundra killed his wife the villagers fined him a feast of rice and a calf, and then assisted him in cremating the corpse. When Koliha

[1] An interesting parallel is furnished in a note by the late Rai Bahadur Hira Lal on a Report by a certain Captain Sinnock about conditions in the Surguja State in 1818, of which he was then in charge. A landholder named Parbal Sahy had ordered a witch to be put to death. During his trial the Court asked him, 'Do you know that he who is the author of murder commits a great crime?', to which he replied, 'I know that it is a very great crime to commit a murder, but in my country, Surguja, it is no crime to kill a witch'. Sinnock reported the most drastic witch-tests, including the ordeal by water and a test wherein the suspect had to spout milk from the mouth onto a pipal leaf. Hira Lal 'Witches and their Ordeals', *Man in India*, Vol. VI (1926), pp. 295 ff.